Keeping in view the need to create additional irrigation potential, the Government has taken various policy and programme initiatives. These include creation of additional irrigation potential through new major, medium and minor irrigation projects; completion of ongoing projects; rehabilitation and modernization of existing irrigation systems; restructuring and reorientation of the Command Area Development Programme; improving water management practice through Participatory Irrigation Management, promoting efficient and economic use of water for various purposes and laying emphasis on water conservation through various methods including use of latest technologies.

In addition to allocation in the State Plans under the irrigation sector, Central Government is also providing financial assistance to the States in the form of loans under the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP), launched by the Central Government during 1996-97. Under the programme financial assistance in the form of Central loan is being extended to State Governments to help them complete ongoing irrigation projects in a time bound manner so that the benefits could accrue at the earliest. A Fast Track Programme under the AIBP has also been introduced with effect from February, 2002 to provide 100% loan assistance for those projects which can be completed within one year (two working seasons).

Production cost of agricultural products

†3182. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI :
SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the production cost of the agricultural products will have to be reduced for making improvement in the agricultural sector in the country;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government in the matter;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the production cost of the agricultural products can be reduced by increasing the production rate and enlarging the area of irrigated land; and

(d) if so, the production rate with regard to the irrigated land as well as the non-irrigated land in the country together with its impact on the production cost?

†Original Notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (c) The cost of production of agricultural products depends, *inter alia,* on yield rate (production rate). The Government has taken several steps to increase yield rate of various agricultural crops. Important among them are promoting intensive agriculture like integrated Cereals Development Programme in rice based, wheat based and coarse cereals based cropping systems areas. The Government also gives subsidy for various inputs such as sprinklers and drip irrigation to small farmers to encourage them to take up intensive agriculture. Some of these schemes have been brought under a Macro-Management Scheme to give flexibility to States in the implementation of the scheme as per their respective local requirements. These measures are expected to increase yield rate which in turn would reduce the cost of production. Besides, Government have launched Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP) and National Watershed Development Programme (NEDP) which would increase area under irrigation.

(d) The yield rates by irrigated/non-irrigated land are not maintained at all-India level. However, since production cost is inversely proportional to yield rate, higher yield rate, citrus-peribus, leads to lower cost of production.

MSP of crops

3183. SHRI SURENDRA LATH : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have raised the Minimum Support Price (MSP) of some crops;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the proposal to enhance the MSP of oilseeds and pulses was under the consideration of Government; and

(d) if so, the steps taken to implement that proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (d) The Government have recently announced the Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for kharif crops including kharif oilseeds and pulses of 2003-04 season. A Statement showing the increase in the MSPs for kharif crops of 2003-04 season over the last season is enclosed (*See* below). The designated public and